Sick Sugar Mills

425. SHRI MANIKRAO HODLYA GAVIT : Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state :

(a) the number of sick sugar mills lying closed in Maharashtra;

(b) whether the Government are aware that the farmers had to burn their sugarcane crops due to non receipt of sugarcane by the sugar mills;

(c) if so, the steps taken to avoid the recurrence of such a situation; and

(d) the efforts made to reopen the sick sugar mills?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV) : (a) Four sugar mills namely, Changdeo, Belapur, Jijamata and Sindkheda remained closed during the 1995-96 sugar season but none of them is registered as sick unit with BIFR.

(b) to (d) During the sugar season 1995-96, Madhya Pradesh has reported burning of sugarcane in an area of 134 hectares but stated that most of the sugarcane burnt was of secondary growth after first harvesting and was uneconomical. It was burnt for making the field ready for the coming kharif season. The districts involved were Hoshangabad and Narsinghpur where no sugar factory exists and the sugarcane is utilised by Gur and Khandsari units. Besides same cases of accidental burning have been reported by Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh. The Maharashtra Government has reportedly paid as grant @ Rs. 5,000 per Hectare in respect of the cane burnt/ remained uncrushed during the season 1995-96.

[English]

Poor Quality Domestic Switches

426. SHRI UTTAMSINGH PAWAR : Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the newsitem captioned "ISI draw flak for unstatisfied performance" appearing in the "Deccan Herald", dated December 26, 1996;

(b) if so, the facts thereof;

(c) the name of the manufacturers on whose products the Consumer Education & Research Centre, Ahmedabad conducted sample tests; and

(d) the action taken/proposed to be taken against the manufacturers of poor quality domestic switches ?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) : The news-item was with reference to certain tests conducted in the year 1994 by Consumer Education and Research Centre (CERC) Ahmedabad on sample of 16A 24V switches of eight different brands. It was stated in the news-item that all the samples bore ISI Mark and failed to reach international standards. However, it was found by BIS that out of these 8 brands, only two brands were bearing BIS Standard Mark. Even in these cases, only one piece each out fo the 5 samples of both these brand names failed endurance test requirements.

The manufacturers whose samples were tested were:

1. Anchor Electronics & Electrical Pvt. Ltd., Bombay.
2. Shalimar Electronics Industries, Thane.
3. Powercone Enterprises, Gandhinagar.
4. Precision Industries, Bombay.
5. Prem Electrical Industries, Gujarat.
6. Sonia Electricals, Delhi.
7. Pointer Industries, Bombay.
8. Manufacturer of brand 'diamond' not identified.

The samples of manufacturers at 1 and 2 above had the BIS Standard Mark.

(d) In order to ensure consistency of BIS certified products, BIS conducts regular surveillance operation under its Scheme of Testing and Inspection.

In the cases of the aforesaid two BIS Licensees, several inspections were carried out and samples tested during the years 1994-96. BIS making was also suspended for some period on account of failure of a few samples. The Bureau has informed that after resumption of marking, their present performance has been found satisfactory. However, surveillance activities on them have been intensified.

Foreigners in Jails

427. SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) the number of foreigners in the jails indicating the number of women and children amongst them; and

(b) the number of foreign mercenaries booked in militancy and in other crimes and offences separately ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS : (SHRI MOHD. MAQBOOL DAR) : (a) and (b) The information is being collected and will be laid on the table of the House.